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RECENT JUDAICA AND HEBRAICA

- Die Mischna Berakot (Gebete)*: Text, Übersetzung und Erklärung, nebst einem textkritischen Anhang. Von D. OSCAR HOLTZMANN, a. o. Prof. d. Theologie an der Univ. Giessen. Giessen: ALFRED TÖPELMANN, 1912. pp. viii + 106.
- Die Mischna Pesachim (Ostern)*: Text, Übersetzung und Erklärung, nebst einem textkritischen Anhang. Von D. Dr. GEORG BEER, o. Prof. d. Theologie an der Univ. Heidelberg. Giessen: ALFRED TÖPELMANN, 1912. pp. xxiv + 212.
- Der Tosephtatraktat Berakot*. Text, Übersetzung und Erklärung. Von D. OSCAR HOLTZMANN, a. o. Prof. d. Theologie an der Univ. Giessen. Giessen: ALFRED TÖPELMANN, 1912. pp. xvi + 99.

Under ordinary circumstances one would have been glad to welcome the attempt of non-Jewish scholars to present their point of view in the exposition of the text of the Mishnah. Jewish scholars whose religious practices are regulated by precepts supposed to be derived from the Mishnah are apt to overlook difficulties. An 'outsider', however, who wishes to understand the Mishnah will draw attention to these difficulties, and perhaps succeed in pointing out the way to the correct solution. From this edition of the Mishnah, projected by Holtzmann and Beer, good results might have been expected, as such leading theologians as Marti and Nowack, who have done splendid work in the exegesis of the Old Testament, are to be among the contributors. The first two volumes, however, that have been published, *Berakot* and *Pesachim*, edited by Holtzmann and Beer, respectively, are rather disappointing. In their prospectus the editors grandiloquently expatiate on the pioneer work they are doing. This in itself is an intentional slur upon the work of their predecessors. The Mishnah has been studied with unabated zeal

since its redaction up till the present time, and the best minds of the Jewish race have been devoted to its elucidation. At the best, modern scholars can only attempt to add something to that which is already known about the Mishnah.

Prof. Holtzmann's introduction to the tractate *Berakot* is a lengthy discussion on Jewish liturgy. There is hardly anything new in it, and the author should certainly have referred to Jewish writers who have treated of this subject and to whom he is entirely indebted. It can by no means lay claim to original research, though it is a lucid account of the subject, and will be of service to beginners. Only a few pages are devoted to the tractate itself.

The vocalization of the text is on the whole well done, but can certainly be improved in many places. In some paragraphs there are grammatical slips such as *אָרְיָה* (I, 4) instead of *אָרְיָה* and *קָרִית* (II, 5 a and *passim*) for *קָרִית*. The consistent punctuation of *קָה* is scarcely defensible. There are also a number of errors which can only be accounted for by an imperfect knowledge of Hebrew, as, for instance, *וְיָתִי* (I, 5) instead of *וְיָתִי* and *פָּעִין* (IV, 3 and many other places) for the traditional *פָּעִין*. In his *Textkritischer Anhang* he states that the punctuated texts have *פָּעִין*, *aber dem Sinn und der Form nach ist dieses Wort stat. constr. von פָּעִין und nicht aus פָּעִין und פָּעִין zusammengesetzt*. Had Prof. Holtzmann considered the usage of *פָּעִין* and the exact meaning of *פָּעִין* in this connexion, he would have spared us his original suggestion. The notes are full on theological matters, but are inadequate from the philological point of view. A note which will commend itself to the consideration of scholars is on *אִם לֹא עָשָׂה מְעַשָּׂה* (II, 5 a), which Prof. Holtzmann takes literally: *wenn er Arbeit nicht tut*. The current explanation is that this phrase is a euphemism; but the writer observes: *das Judentum setzt keine Belohnung darauf, dass ein Bräutigam seine Schuldigkeit möglichst lange nicht tut*.

If Prof. Holtzmann can be blamed for not giving due credit to the work of Jewish scholars, Prof. Beer is certainly guilty of an unsympathetic attitude towards the whole subject. This in a measure disqualifies him from doing the work scientifically, for

his prejudices prevent him from grasping the true meaning of certain customs. Strack's success in talmudic literature is no doubt due to the sympathy with which he approaches his subject. But Prof. Beer speaks of him in a derogatory manner, because, as is explained, he follows the Rabbins *und findet darum vor allem in der jüdischen Presse fortgesetzten Beifall* (p. vii).

The introduction extends over 109 pages, and deals with the history of the Festival of Passover in all its phases. Had it not been marred by anti-Jewish remarks, it would have been a valuable contribution, for Prof. Beer has collected all material dealing with Passover observances throughout all ages. In consequence, however, of these prejudices he sees everywhere Greek and Roman influence. According to him מְרִאשׁוֹת may be a direct translation of the Greek προσκεφάλαιον (p. 66)! He quite overlooks the fact that this word occurs in Gen. 28. 11, where no Greek influence is possible. Nor does his suggestion that in the benediction on wine there is a relic of libation to the deity (p. 75) deserve any consideration. A base accusation is his statement that the crucifixion of Jesus was a sacrifice: *ein Reinigungsoffer für das Volk und auch ein Opfer zwecks Erlösung aus der römischen Herrschaft, um deren baldiges Aufhören ja die Juden in der Paschanacht damals beteten* (p. 95). He bases this view on Robertson Smith's statement in his *Religion of the Semites* that in olden times the execution of sinners took the form of a sacrifice. But, surely, Smith speaks there of the early Semites, and how could this be reasonably applied to practices of the Second Temple?

Having had before him the editions of Baneth and Strack, Prof. Beer had a very easy task in dealing with the text and the notes. Nevertheless there are a number of errors in interpretation and vocalization. A few examples will suffice. עֵבֶר (III, 8 a) should be עֶבֶר, as the Pi'el has quite a different meaning (cp. Judges 3. 26 and 1 Kings 6. 21). The phrase אֵינָהּ הִיא הַמִּדָּה (I, 7 b) can only mean *this is not the principle or standard*. Beer translates: *das ist keine richtige Entscheidung*. In his note, instead of explaining this phrase, he makes the following scholarly

and scientific remark: *Tant de bruit pour une omelette! Der ganze kleinliche Streit dreht sich darum, ob zum Verbrennen bestimmte reine heilige Gegenstände zusammen verbrannt werden dürfen mit unreinen Gegenständen!* He also vocalizes with a definite article in cases where an undetermined noun is meant. Such punctuation as *בֹּסוֹת שְׁלֵי* (X, 1 b) is syntactically inadmissible.

Prof. Holtzmann's edition of the Tosephta Berakot is inferior to his edition of the Mishnah. Whereas the text of the latter is edited tolerably well, the former is teeming with errors. This is to be accounted for by the circumstance that the Jews did not study the Tosephta with the same assiduity as the Mishnah, as for halakic purposes the former is of secondary importance. Of course, this fact does not sound complimentary to Prof. Holtzmann's pioneer work. His short introduction is marked by the absence of any attempt to acquaint the reader with the problems involved in the study of the Tosephta, especially in its relation to the Mishnah. According to him the Tosephta is a kind of an early commentary on the Mishnah. Students of the various problems will not find it necessary to refute this view. Nor will any one take seriously the statement that *Gemara* means *Vollendung* (p. x).

The errors in the text are of various kinds, and some of them could have easily been avoided, had the editor possessed an adequate knowledge of Hebrew grammar. There is no necessity to enumerate them all here, but I shall select a few characteristic examples. *מִלָּא כָּל־הָאָרֶץ* (Isa. 6. 3) becomes with Prof. Holtzmann *מִלָּא כָּל וְכוּ* (I, 9 b). He may have had the inclination of improving Masoretic Hebrew, but he should have at least notified the reader. The vocalization *תִּרְעִיָּה* (I, 11) violates an elementary rule of Hebrew grammar, and had the editor read his Bible carefully, he would have known that the correct form is *תִּרְעִיָּה* (Isa. 43. 19). *הִיבָה* (I, 14) is impossible, since the root is *הִבָּה*. The correct form is *הִיבָה*. The Pu'al participle plural is *מְטוֹנְפִין*, not *מְטוֹנְפִין* (II, 17). For the impossible *הַבְּרִיּוֹת* read *הַבְּרִיּוֹת* (III, 3 b). In the book of Esther (5. 6, &c.) we find the form *בְּקֶשֶׁה*, and Prof. Holtzmann can certainly advance no cogent reasons why

he should vocalize בְּקִשְׁתָּם (III, 7). In Hebrew there are two words חָל *profane* (from חָלַל) and חוֹל *sand*. Prof. Holtzmann is apparently unaware of this distinction, as he has חוֹלָיו שֶׁל מוֹעֵד (III, 10, 11) instead of חָלָיו. Luckily he does not render it by *sand*, perhaps because he has no illuminating theory about sand, as he has about the divine appellation *Jeja* (יֵי). The perfect Pi'el is בָּרַךְ, not בְּרַךְ (IV, 8 c, twice). *To enter* is לָכַנס, not לָבֵנס (IV, 8 d). The form מְזוֹלוֹת next to כּוֹכְבִּים (VII, 6 b) may puzzle an innocent reader. Any Hebrew dictionary would have told the learned theologian that according to 2 Kings 23. 5 the correct form is מְזוֹלוֹת. The vocalization תַּאֲמִירָה (VII, 7 a) instead of תַּאֲמִירָה is a splendid display of the knowledge of Hebrew conjugations. הָא (I, 15 b) belongs to the following clause, not to the preceding. בִּין בֶּן יִבִּין בֶּן (II, 7) goes with יִתְפַּלֵּל, not with מִכֶּה, and it simply means *in any case*. הָלָלוּ (IV, 5 a) should be הִלְלוּ *these*. Had the editor studied carefully the preceding paragraph, he might have known that הִלְלוּ corresponds to הוּ. The imperative, *praise*, is certainly out of the question.

- Der babylonische Talmud.* Nach der einzigen vollständigen Handschrift München, Codex Hebraicus 95, mittelst Facsimile-Lichtdrucks vervielfältigt, mit Inhaltsangabe für jede Seite und einer Einleitung versehen. Von HERMANN L. STRACK. (Two volumes.) Leiden: A. W. SIJTHOFF, 1912. foll. 577.
- Der babylonische Talmud.* Nach der münchener Handschrift Cod. Hebr. 95, mittelst Facsimile-Lichtdrucks. Herausgegeben von HERMANN L. STRACK. Einleitung. Leiden: A. W. SIJTHOFF, 1912. pp. xliii.

In spite of the fact that the Babylonian Talmud is the principal authority for the religious life of the Jews, and is assiduously studied by millions, no critical edition thereof has as yet appeared. It is true that it is reprinted exceedingly often at the various centres of Jewish learning, but even the

most improved editions lack accuracy, and the notes contributed by ingenious Rabbis can seldom be seriously considered. This state of affairs is, no doubt, to be ascribed to the circumstance that by far the greater bulk of talmudic students have scarcely paid any attention to the linguistic characteristics of the Talmud. To them this study is merely a fulfilment of a duty towards their Creator and a source for the knowledge of religious observances. Their aim is to find out the depth of the meaning of all the passages and to reconcile contradictory and conflicting statements. It is quite immaterial whether a noun has one termination or another. And orthography certainly does not deserve a moment's thought. What difference could it make whether we write רבנא or רבנא, as long as we know what Raba intended to convey? There is no harm if R. Eli'ezer and R. El'azar are confused, since 'both are the words of the living God'.

This attitude towards the Talmud, defensible though it is from the point of view of the pious Rabbi, has been detrimental to the scientific study of this vast subject. Owing to the careless handling of linguistic peculiarities by printers, a good deal of the grammatical traces have been obliterated. Grammarians have found the printed editions of the Talmud 'a broken reed'. No rule could be established unless it was corroborated by independent evidence.

In modern times, however, the Talmud has been approached from a scientific point of view. It thus became a study for its own sake in a new sense. Owing, however, to the peculiar circumstances under which the Talmud was transmitted, we have little material from which to derive accurate knowledge. There are no data to determine at what time the Talmud was committed to writing. The first complete copy of which mention is made is that which was written down from memory by the exilarch Natronai b. Hakinai for the Spanish Jews towards the end of the eighth century. It is not unsafe to assume that the commitment to writing of the Babylonian Talmud coincided with the time when Aramaic was about to cease to be the vernacular of the majority of Oriental Jews. All these considerations indicate the amount of

caution with which the investigator is to approach the Talmud. The difficulties are still enhanced by the paucity of MSS. It is also to be noted that quotations in the writings of early Jewish Halakists seldom agree verbatim with the printed editions. It is true that these quotations are usually from memory. It is, however, a remarkable fact that, whereas quotations from tannaitic sources are practically identical with the printed editions, talmudic passages are full of discrepancies.

Bearing these points in mind, it is scarcely to be wondered at that the MS. of the Babylonian Talmud in the Munich library is looked upon as a veritable treasure. It is the only existent MS. which contains almost the entire Talmud. It dates from the middle of the fourteenth century, a fairly old date for Jewish MSS., centuries older than the earliest MS. of the entire Bible. As may be expected from a work of this magnitude, the MS. is not free from errors, some of which are due to the ignorance of the copyist. But this hardly detracts from its value. Full descriptions of this MS. have formerly been furnished by Haim Joseph David Azulai in his *Shem ha-Gedolim*, Steinschneider, Lebrecht, and Rabinovicz. The latter did some excellent service for the scientific study of the Talmud by collating the MS. with the printed editions. His *variae lectiones* or *Dikduke Soferim*, as it is more familiarly known, gives all known variants in Orders I, II, IV (without Abot), and Zebahim and Menaḥot of the fifth Order. These tractates are covered in fifteen volumes of Rabinovicz's gigantic work. Ehrentreu published a sixteenth volume containing all the variants in Hulin.

The problem how to make this valuable MS. accessible to all talmudic students has often presented itself. For scholars who lived outside Germany seldom, if ever, had the opportunity of studying this unique source at first hand. It has also been observed by competent authorities that in spite of Rabinovicz's careful and painstaking labour, the Munich MS. needed re-examination in many details. Moreover, the MS. itself could not be expected to remain in good condition for ever, especially

as it is frequently handled by various scholars. To print a copy of it would entail a tremendous amount of labour, and mistakes would be unavoidable.

The advance of artistic photography has helped to solve this problem by making it possible to give a faithful reproduction of this MS., and the firm of Sijthoff in Leiden deserves credit for the perfection of the work. No pains were spared to make the facsimiles as artistic as possible. The two sumptuous volumes will indeed be an ornament in every first-class library.

Prof. Hermann L. Strack, the enterprising editor, is to be congratulated on having seized the right opportunity and carried out successfully this monumental task. The care and attention he bestowed upon this undertaking are evident on every page. Being one of the foremost systematizers of Jewish science, Prof. Strack provided the photographic reproductions with some advantages which make the use of the facsimiles more convenient than the original. The writing of that MS. is rather small, and the facsimiles were therefore enlarged by one-fifth. As is well known, all the printed editions of the Babylonian Talmud since the sixteenth century have adopted a uniform system of pagination which differs from that of the Munich MS. In order to avoid confusion and to facilitate the task of finding passages, Prof. Strack, with his characteristic foresight and methodology, marked by dividing lines in the text, and indicated on the margin, the places where pages begin in the printed editions.

The small volume accompanying the two large volumes of facsimiles contains a succinct introduction dealing with all points appertaining to the MS. and its owners. It also gives a concise bibliographical sketch, as well as an account of the copyists. In the codex some parts of *Pesaḥim*, *Ketubot*, and *Menaḥot* are missing, and the editor has done well in including them in this volume. These supplementary passages are based as far as possible on other MSS.

Die Urkunden im Talmud. Zusammengestellt, erklärt und mit den Ausgrabungen verglichen. Von Dr. LEOPOLD FISCHER. Berlin: MAYER & MÜLLER, 1912. pp. x + 157. (Reprinted from *Jahrbuch der Jüdisch-Literar. Gesellschaft*, IX.)

Mishnah, a digest of the basic principles of the early Jewish jurisprudence. *Baba Mezi'ah (Middle Gate)*, Order IV, Treatise 11. Translated and annotated by HYMAN E. GOLDIN, LL.B., of the New York Bar. New York and London: G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS, 1913. pp. viii + 205.

It has long ago been recognized that documents offer the most reliable material for the study of legal institutions and internal life of a nation, as they usually represent actual facts which speak for themselves. In the Talmud documents of this nature are extremely rare, but there is no doubt that the formulas which the talmudic authorities prescribe for documents are of almost equal importance. For in them we are often able to detect the development of legal enactments, which are as a rule the result of practical experience.

Dr. Leopold Fischer, who undertook to explain these documents and formulas, has acquitted himself very creditably of his task. His chief merit, apart from having collected all the formulas that are scattered throughout the Talmud, lies in his making extensive and intelligent use of the commentaries on the Talmud as well as of the legal codes, not neglecting even later authorities. The author shows a thorough acquaintance with this vast literature, and is quite master of his subject.

The comparisons made with the Aramaic papyri, recently discovered in Egypt, and similar documents are very instructive. Genizah documents which have been published as far as now are also fully discussed by the author. In this respect, however, more work will have to be done when the documents, now stored up in libraries and private collections, will have been published.

In his preface the author says that for typographical reasons he was unable to adopt the current system of transcribing Hebrew letters. This is, however, no excuse for writing

Tossaphoth (p. 96, note 1 and *passim*), Tossephta (p. 98, note 3), and Anan = אָנָן (p. 146, l. 8).

Mr. Goldin's aim in translating the Mishnah of the tractate Bābā Mešā'a is to give the English reader some idea of Jewish jurisprudence. His point of view is accordingly that of a jurist rather than that of a philologist. On the whole, the translation makes a good impression, and some of the legal terms are successfully rendered. In a number of instances, however, there is a lack of philological accuracy and precision. Chapter ii, Mishnah IX, and Chapter iv, Mishnah I, hardly do justice to the original, though, in his notes to these paragraphs, Mr. Goldin shows that he grasped the purport of the text. There is also a number of parenthetical sentences which unnecessarily interrupt the translation. Thus the remark that a certain view does not prevail (see p. 144) should have been put in the notes.

Some chapters are preceded by short introductions which give a *résumé* of the contents. The author tells us that he has prepared a general introduction to this treatise 'to prove that there was a certain unity of thought in the mind of the redactor of the Mishnah when he embodied in the present treatise the various branches of the law'.

The copious and extensive notes attempt to assign reasons for every decision arrived at in the text, but textual explanations are entirely excluded. The bulk of these notes are excerpted from the Gemara as well as from commentators and early codifiers, such as al-Fasi and Maimonides.

Although the form of the translation is a popular one, Mr. Goldin would have lost nothing had he taken more care in transliterating Hebrew words. Such forms as *Kama*, *Kidushin*, *Mezi'ah*, and *Perutha* are inexcusable.

Mose ben Maimūn's Mischna-Kommentar zum Traktat Baba Bathra (Kap. I-IV). Arabischer Urtext mit hebräischer Übersetzung, Einleitung, deutscher Übersetzung, nebst kritischen und erläuternden Anmerkungen. Von Dr. JACOB SÄNGER. Berlin: M. POPPELAUER, 1912. pp. 86 + 37.

Editors of Maimonides's Commentary on the Mishnah are in good company, for such foremost Arabists as Barth and Derenbourg edited the Commentaries on Makkot and Ṭeharot respectively. Although this Commentary is of vast importance for the elucidation of the Mishnah, no uniform edition of the original Arabic has hitherto appeared, and, with the exception of Derenbourg's edition of Ṭeharot, only stray pamphlets containing the whole or part of a single tractate are now and again published. The present publication, together with that of Dr. Immanuel Lewy which appeared in 1907, completes the tractate Baba Batra.

The task of editing this Commentary is not very arduous. Maimonides wrote this work for Talmudists who are familiar with the legal terminology of the Mishnah. Hence he did not attempt to render these expressions into Arabic. Often entire sentences are left in their Hebrew form. In this respect Maimonides differs from the earlier Arabic-speaking Halakists like Sa'adyā and Samuel b. Ḥofnī who gave Arabic equivalents for almost every Hebrew term. Due to this circumstance only a small number of words is employed in this Commentary. Moreover, the Hebrew translation, though faulty in many cases, is of very great help to a careful editor. In spite of these facilities, the results of this edition are very poor. Dr. Sängers seldom takes the trouble to harmonize the Arabic original with the Hebrew translation, or to point out their differences. In his *Einleitung*, which is nothing more than a mere preface, he says that in improving the Hebrew translation and in preparing the German rendering he followed the advice given by Maimonides to Samuel Ibn Tibbon. Dr. Sängers might have had the intention of doing so, but he certainly did not carry it out. His improvements of the Hebrew amount to nothing. On p. 1 of the text (see note 3) he alters **הַחֲצֵר הַזֹּאת זֶה הַחֲצֵר**—he quotes Gesenius-Kautzsch to support this correction!—but leaves the inaccurate and awkward expression **וְנִתְּרָה כָּל אֶחָד מִשְׁנֵיהֶם בְּרוּחַ פְּלוּנִי** uncorrected. Nor is he consistent, for constructions like **זֶה הַחֲצֵר** are abounding in this edition. On p. 31 of the text (see note 165) there is a specimen of Dr. Sängers

Hebrew which leads one to doubt whether he is qualified to improve a Hebrew text. In this passage he misunderstands the meaning of זיאהרה which simply denotes *addition* and ought to be rendered by להוסיף, and not by מטובה.

The notes are deplorably inadequate. They deal mostly with the text of the Mishnah rather than with the Commentary. One cannot see the need of expatiating on such words as ארים, which every lexicon explains satisfactorily. On the other hand, he fails to comment on ביינה (p. 23), in the sense of *witness*, and גאב *he brought* (*ibid.*) which is a vulgar contraction of *jā'a bi*. A very interesting expression is תניב אלארץ (p. 6) *the earth will produce*. An Arabic stylist would have used the word תנבת. This גאב may be the ordinary vulgar word just referred to, or may have the classical signification (fourth conjugation) *he answered*, and be a translation of הארץ תענה (Hos. 2. 24). The first explanation is more likely in this case.

The number of misprints is tremendous both in the Hebrew and the Arabic. Misspellings like הקרקאות (p. 6) and תכועות (p. 21) are to be met with very frequently. As there is no list of corrections, it is hard to tell which are printer's errors and which are to be ascribed to the MS. This is the case with פחות (p. 4, l. 2) instead of פתוח, and תתבע (p. 34, l. 23) instead of תתבת. Besides these errors there is a considerable number of wrong interpretations. The word שריה (p. 9, l. 27) = *moisture*, Arabic بلل, and is derived from שרה. But the editor in note 49 takes it to be a *coat of mail*, and tells us where it occurs in the Bible! How he could reconcile that with Arabic بلل, and how he could derive any sense passes one's comprehension. תצר (p. 10, l. 21) is the imperf. indic. 3rd fem. first conjugation, and means *injure*. But in note 55 the editor tries to explain it as fifth conjugation with an active sense! תפיר (p. 13, l. 18; see note 70) is taken by the editor as the sixth conjugation, and he asserts that the lexica do not give that form. It is, however, nothing more than *tafirru*, י being a *mater lectionis*. Considering the fact that *farra* means 'he fled', whereas we require a word meaning 'he flew', I should like to suggest the reading תטיר.

Die Petiḥōt der Pesiqṭā de Rab Kāhanā. Von Dr. DAVID KÜNSTLINGER. Krakau: Selbstverlag, 1912. pp. 79.

This book is a critical analysis of the opening addresses (Petiḥōt) that occur in *Pesiqṭā d' Rab Kāhanā*. By a plausible mode of procedure Dr. Künstlinger endeavours to establish which of the Petiḥōt are genuine and belong to the place where they are at present found and which crept in there by confusion. For it is well known that collectors and copyists sometimes grouped together various homilies from different books. Dr. Künstlinger skilfully dissects every *Piskā*, and by carefully examining the parallel passages he usually succeeds in assigning each homily to its right place. It is no doubt an important contribution to the study of Midrashic literature to which the author devoted another book entitled *Altjüdische Bibeldeutungen* which appeared in 1911.

Jahrbuch der Jüdisch-Literarischen Gesellschaft. (Sitz: Frankfurt a. M.), VIII (1910 = 5671). Frankfurt a. M.: J. KAUFFMANN, 1911. pp. 452 + 114.

Jahrbuch der Jüdisch-Literarischen Gesellschaft. (Sitz: Frankfurt a. M.), IX (1911 = 5672). Frankfurt a. M.: J. KAUFFMANN, 1912. pp. 505 + 88.

These two volumes of the *Jahrbuch* contain a number of very important essays on various subjects connected with Jewish literature. Dr. Ehrentreu's learned work entitled *Sprachliches und Sachliches aus dem Talmud*, which is continued in both volumes, is full of clever interpretations of talmudic passages. He is certainly right in assuming that the correct vocalization of רכוב *a rider* (Baba meṣi'a 8 b) is רָכֹב (VIII, p. 3). Barth's view that such forms are *fā'ul* or *fā'ūl* with an active signification (*Nominalbildung*, § 122 d) is not convincing, since we are dealing with a late period when the significations of the various forms were more or less fixed, and *fā'ul* became the ordinary passive participle. On the other hand, Dr. Ehrentreu is inaccurate in

considering it an Aramaic form which became hebraized in the Mishnah, as such forms occur in the Bible. Cp. *בָּחֵן* *one who examines* (Jer. 6. 7) and *עֹשֶׂה* *an oppressor* (*ibid.* 22. 3). The most that can be said is that the frequency of the occurrence of this form in the Mishnah is due to Aramaic influence. Everybody is familiar with the epigram *אִיזוֹ חָכָם הָרואֵה אֶת הַנוֹלֵד* *He is wise who foresees what is to be* (Tamid 32 a). But it becomes infinitely wittier with Dr. Ehrentreu's explanation that there is here an intentional play on words, as *חַמְמָה* sometimes means *a midwife*, and *נוֹלֵד* denotes *a child* (VIII, p. 8). A plausible suggestion is to take *כַּסָּא* (Shabbat 66 a) not as *a chair*, but as *a cripple who is moved about in a chair*. It is accordingly to be vocalized as *כַּפָּא* like *רַכָּב* (IX, p. 25).—Dr. Breuer's *Die rechtsphilosophischen Grundlagen des jüdischen und des modernen Rechts* deals with the principles underlying certain laws.—Dr. B. Lewin is one of the best authorities on Sherira Gaon's famous Epistle. In his essay *Zur Charakteristik und Biographie des R. Scherira Gaon* (vol. VIII) he displays vast erudition and critical acumen. At the end he reviews A. Hyman's edition of that Epistle.—Dr. Bondi discusses at full length Werner Sombart's book *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben* (*ibid.*). That book appeared in 1911, and created a sensation in all Jewish circles.—Dr. Salomon Stein gives a critical analysis of the book of Ecclesiastes (*ibid.*).—In his essay *Zur Methodologie der talmudischen Biblexegese* Dr. Biberfeld attempts to describe the system which the Rabbis adopted in deriving decisions from biblical verses (*ibid.*).—Very valuable are the discussions of Dr. Grünhut on the north-west boundaries of the Holy Land (*ibid.*), of Dr. Fischer on the Aramaic Jewish papyri (*ibid.*), and of I. N. Epstein on the book *בְּשֵׁר עַל נְבִי נְחִלִים* (*ibid.*).—The merit of Dr. Fischer's treatise on *Die Urkunden im Talmud* has been appreciated in another place of this REVIEW.—Dr. S. Funk has some valuable suggestions in his article *Beiträge zur Geographie des Landes Babel*.—In his *Rechtsgutachten der Geonim* I. N. Epstein makes some clever corrections in Cassel's edition of that book (vol. IX). It is a thorough study, dealing exhaustively

with all minute points.—Most of us have been accustomed to speak of Jewish Hellenism; but Dr. Samuel Halevy questions the validity of this term. In his essay *Ist der Name 'Jüdischer Hellenismus' berechtigt?* (*ibid.*) he points out that the hellenistic movement only affected a comparatively small number of Jewish individuals, while the bulk of the nation opposed it very violently.—Those who are interested in the history of the Jews in Germany and Poland will find ample material in these two volumes. Dr. Löwenstein continues his essay *Zur Geschichte der Juden in Fürth* (vol. VIII). J. C. publishes *Aus dem ältesten Protokollbuch der Portugiesisch-jüdischen Gemeinde in Hamburg*, with translation and notes (vols. VIII and IX), and Dr. Stein reprints an important document which was issued by the Emperor Karl V on April 3, 1544, and ratified by the Emperor Ferdinand I on Jan. 19, 1562. This document purports to give certain privileges to Jews (vol. IX). Dr. Lewin gives an exhaustive account of Jewish physicians in Poland (*ibid.*).

The mediaeval Hebrew texts that are published in these two volumes are very important for specialists. Joseph Kara's commentary on the Second Book of Samuel, an anonymous commentary on Job (vol. VIII), the decisions of R. Isaac of Corbeil, and Joseph Nehemia's commentary on Jeremiah (vol. IX), are edited by Dr. S. Eppenstein, A. Sulzbach, J. Wellesz, and Bamberger, respectively. The memoirs of a Polish Jew (Moses Wasserzug) are edited by Dr. Heinrich Loewe (vol. VIII). They are full of quaint anecdotes and incidents, and one may glean from them many facts about the internal life of the Jews in Germany in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The writer explains why he called himself Wasserzug. When a child he was nearly drowned, and was drawn out of the water in a miraculous way. Then the etymology of the Hebrew word מִשָּׁה is given in Exod. 2. 10 as being connected with the word מִשָּׁה *he drew out*. Bearing these reasons in mind, this Moses had no hesitation in adopting the name of Wasserzug when asked by the Prussian government to get a surname.

Ahawath Zion we-Jeruscholaim. Varianten und Ergänzungen des Textes des Jerusalemischen Talmuds, nach alten Quellen und handschriftlichen Fragmenten ediert, mit kritischen Noten und Erläuterungen versehen. Von B. RATNER. *Tractate: Rosch-Haschana und Sukka.* Wilna: F. GARBER, 1911. pp. 148.

Ahawath Zion we-Jeruscholaim. Varianten und Ergänzungen des Textes des Jerusalemischen Talmuds nach alten Quellen und handschriftlichen Fragmenten ediert, mit kritischen Noten und Erläuterungen versehen. Von B. RATNER. *Tractat Megilla.* Wilna: F. GARBER, 1912. pp. 110.

Annotationes Criticae ad duos Talm. Bab. et Hierosolym. Tractatus Baba Kama et Baba Mezia. Textum constituit, res explicavit historicamque originem ex fontibus investigavit J. H. DÜNNER. Tomus sextus. Frankfurt a M.: SÄNGER UND FRIEDBERG, 1913. pp. 112 + 171.

Unlike the Talmud Babli, the Palestinian Talmud was for various reasons almost entirely neglected, and no commentaries on it have come down to us from the middle ages. The task of explaining it is, therefore, by no means an easy one, and the lack of early MSS. of the entire work enhances the difficulty. As the Yerushalmi was extensively quoted in the vast halakic literature, it has long ago been recognized that by comparing these quotations correct readings might be restored. It is this task that B. Ratner undertook to accomplish. With stupendous energy and great erudition he collected all the Yerushalmi quotations, and was thereby enabled to throw light on many obscure passages. The magnitude of Herr Ratner's work will be realized when we consider the fact that about 260 pages are devoted to three small tractates, although in these volumes he takes no account of passages occurring in Babli and Tosephta. For the tractate Rosh ha-Shanah he was also able to make use of the Yerushalmi fragments published by Prof. L. Ginzberg.

Some of the notes may at first sight appear too long, but, considering the vital importance of the subject, one would welcome an error in that direction. The only notes we could dispense with

are those that merely tell us that a word is vocalized in a certain MS. See, for instance, p. 26 on Rosh ha-Shanah. On the whole, this work will serve as an excellent basis for a critical edition of the Yerushalmi, should such a work ever be undertaken. One is glad to observe that the trustees of the Zunz-Stiftung have recognized the value of Ratner's contribution to Jewish learning, and are subsidizing this edition. It is to be hoped that further encouragement will enable the author to carry out his plan to his own satisfaction.

Among Jewish scholars who possess a thorough and comprehensive mastery of the talmudic literature together with a modern education the late Rabbi Dünner of Amsterdam was a notable figure. His Hebrew annotations to the Talmudim (Babli and Yerushalmi) are a pleasant combination of *pilpul* and sound scholarship. He discusses every passage carefully, and by comparing parallels in the various tractates he is able to correct errors that have crept into the text. It is true that he lacks the ingenuity of the veteran talmudic dialectician; but this very fact perhaps makes his researches more valuable.

The sixth volume covers the tractates Baba kamma and Baba meš'i'a of both Talmudim. The part dealing with the Yerushalmi in a measure supplements Ratner's work, for Rabbi Dünner makes a special point of comparing Yerushalmi passages that have parallels in Babli, Mekilta, and similar works. This volume was published by the sons of the author.

Hebräische Dichtungen. Von Dr. JOACHIM JACOB UNGER, Rabbiner der israelit. Kultusgemeinde zu Iglau. Jubel-Ausgabe. Veranstalet von dankbaren Schülern und Verehrern des Meisters aus Anlass der Vollendung seines 50. Amtsjahres auf dem Iglauer Posten. Mit einem Titelbilde. Wien: R. Löwit, 1911. pp. 153.

Modern Hebrew poetry has passed through many phases, some of which were of short duration. It is only about half

a century ago since any one who could write biblical Hebrew considered it his duty to compose poems in that tongue. The sacred festivals and biblical incidents as a rule furnished ample themes for those 'poets'. Now the times have changed, and at short intervals new lights arise. Even Bialik, whose poems are as yet universally worshipped, is in danger of being supplanted by Shneor, who is regarded by the young readers as the last word in poetry. The *Hebräische Dichtungen*, whose Hebrew title is *הניין בכנור*, by Dr. Unger, belong to those good old times. One need not be a harsh critic to entertain sceptical views about the aesthetic value of these poems. Nevertheless they are a pleasant echo of those 'remote ages', when poetry and scholarship went hand in hand. Dr. Unger is a distinguished Jewish scholar who published some books on Hebrew philology. As was the fashion in his youthful days, he also sought the company of the muses. His poems cover a period of about sixty years, and may to some extent be regarded as historical documents, as they reflect the Jewish culture of the last century. They were scattered in various periodicals all of which are now defunct, and the admirers of Dr. Unger have done well in collecting them into one volume.

The most interesting part is that entitled *שירי ידידות* (*Poems of Friendship*). Most of them are poems addressed to leading scholars of the last century, such as Zunz, Zachariah Frankel, Mendel Stern, Letteris, Kaempf, Dukes, Reifmann, Lazarus, and Steinthal. There are also sonnets on the fiftieth anniversaries of the foundation of the Jewish community at Vienna and the Breslau Seminary. The part *אבני זכרון* has a poem in memory of S. D. Luzzatto.

Talmud-Legenden. Dem Talmud nacherzählt und eingeleitet von HANS LUDWIG HELD. München-Leipzig: HANS-SACHS-VERLAG (G. HAIST), 1912. pp. 88.

It is not the historical or philological side of talmudic legends, but their inherent poetry, that appealed to Herr H. L. Held. He

accordingly selected some fine legends from the Talmud and Midrash, and rendered them freely into German. Indeed, one can hardly call it a rendering, for it is only the central idea that the author tried to reproduce, but the mode of treatment and colouring are entirely his own. This little volume contains twelve legends, all of which are charmingly presented. The material easily lends itself to artistic treatment, and the author made excellent use of it.

It is difficult to see the reason why the author did not arrange the legends in a more logical order. The legends dealing with biblical heroes ought naturally to have preceded those about R. Akiba. And yet *Das Gespenst* (that beautiful story about R. Akiba and the ghost, occurring in Kallah R. II) is placed in front, and is followed by legends about Noah, Abraham, and Isaac.

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